



## *MEETING NOTES*

### Alert and Warning Workshop

Thursday, March 27, 2008

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

OES Headquarters | 3650 Schreiver Avenue, Mather, CA 95655

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**Meeting Purpose:** The first in a series of meetings to implement the provisions of AB2231 (Pavley) regarding enhancing alert, notification and warning system in California through public private partnerships.

**Desired Outcomes:** Obtaining initial information to support AB2231 implementation, identification of key stakeholders and interested parties, and outlining the process for implementing the project over the course of the next year.

**Action Items:**

1. Email list serves will be created by OES as soon as possible, and information regarding next steps will be subsequently sent out to meeting participants.
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### Welcome and Call to Order

Meeting Facilitator Adam Sutkus, California State University, Sacramento, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Sutkus reviewed the agenda, process and ground rules for the day. He reminded the group that the workshop would be the first in a series of meetings called for by Assembly Bill 2231 (Pavley). The presentations given during the meeting were identified as key perspectives intended to give participants good insight regarding the types of issues that will be discussed. Those key perspectives are not the extent of the issues that the group will consider, however, as there are many representatives from different sectors that will provide new information to the discussion of alert and warning in California. Mr. Sutkus handed it over to the Alert and Warning Chair, Director Henry Renteria, Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), for some opening remarks.

### Opening Remarks—Director Henry Renteria, CA OES

Director Renteria welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his appreciation for their attendance and participation. He pointed out that because OES is the chief responding State Agency during all disasters in California, it relies heavily on being able to communicate with many different types of agencies and people. Without effective

communication it's difficult for OES to carry out its duties on behalf of the people of California.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Virginia Tech Shootings, and the October 2007 Southern California Wild Fires, the topic of alert and warning communications has been in the spotlight both statewide and nationally. At the moment, the State has the capability to communicate with various different sectors of the public; it does not have the capability to communicate with the entire public. Mr. Renteria mentioned that there are many successes to be proud of at the local levels, and he emphasized the need to build upon those successes.

As technology improves and the State continues to grow there will be challenges to overcome. The difficulties associated with interoperability show that communication is not simple. In April 2006, Executive Order S-04-06 established the Emergency Partnership Advisory Workgroup (EPAW) which brings together public and private sector entities in order to integrate private sector stakeholders into emergency response efforts. Mr. Renteria acknowledged that this is a relationship on which California needs to continue to build, as it has been great sharing information about what resources are available at the local and private levels.

Additionally, he reminded the group that the Federal Government is very interested in what California is doing in the arena of emergency communications. He underscored the importance of aligning California's efforts with Federal requirements. Mr. Renteria affirmed that there is a lot of work to do in the future, and there are many new faces in the room to help get the job done. He strongly encouraged every participant's involvement, as he hoped this will be yet another item in California's disaster response tool kit.

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## **AB 2231 (Pavley) Overview and the Challenge Ahead**

### **Deputy Director Christina Curry, CA OES:**

Deputy Director Christina Curry, CA OES, gave an overview of the legislation that created this working group (AB 2231, Pavley), and also provided some context on the issue of alert and warning. There is a much to discuss regarding emergency management in California and the critical nature of Alert and Warning. She reminded everyone of Director Renteria's point that every participant's input in this process is very important.

There are many different systems that California currently uses to alert and warn the public. The Emergency Digital Information System (EDIS) provides all types of information to the public and media. In addition, there are systems at the local level that deal with emergencies involving hazardous materials, nuclear power and other specialized systems. Siren alert systems are effective on many levels, as are auto-dial systems such as Reverse 911, which proved to be very effective during the October 2007 Southern California Wild Fires.

Ms. Curry emphasized the importance of understanding that government alone cannot tackle the issue of alert and warning. Communications technology is constantly

changing and, as a result, it is difficult to keep up with the latest infrastructure changes. She mentioned that public/private partnerships are going to be essential in the utilization of available technological resources. The challenge ahead for the Alert and Warning Working Group will be to address the issue in the context of difficult variables, including: 1) the communications backbone that already exists in California; 2) certain key Local and Federal initiatives; and 3) funding options for new systems.

**Deputy Director Kelly Huston, CA OES:**

Deputy Director Kelly Huston thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Given the multitude of media and numerous different perspectives on the subject of alert and warning, it is a very difficult topic to address holistically. Mr. Huston suggested that the group consider the importance of both the content and how the message is being sent out to the public. The ultimate goal, he said, is to reach the maximum number of people in the minimum amount of time.

The system also needs to have some sort of redundancy. It needs to capture people's attention in the most efficient way possible; Mr. Huston emphasized the need to carefully consider the diverse audiences of alert messages. The main purpose of the workshop is to connect with representatives from many different sectors. He encouraged the group to brainstorm with each other to figure out which are the best ways to reach all populations, based on the many different sectors that are represented. He also pointed out that there is no such thing as a crazy idea; all opinions and suggestions are valid.

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## **Selected Key Perspectives**

**People with Disabilities & Elderly, Richard Devylder, CA OES:**

Richard Devylder, CA OES Office of Access and Functional Needs, gave a PowerPoint presentation on people with disabilities & elderly in the context of alert and warning. Anyone who is interested in reviewing this PowerPoint presentation should contact Tyler Block ([tblock@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:tblock@ccp.csus.edu)). Below is a summary of this presentation.

The Office on Access and Functional Needs identifies the needs of people with disabilities before, during and after a disaster. It integrates disability elements and resources into all aspects of emergency management systems.

When considering the development of alert and warning notification systems, it is important to ensure accessibility to all communities. For example, at certain press conferences during the October 2007 Southern California Wild Fires, the sign-language interpreter was cut out of the screen several times. The media did not understand that this was a huge source of information for individuals who are hearing-impaired. Mr. Devylder emphasized that when considering new media with which to alert the public, this group must consider whether or not those media are compatible with existing

technologies that serve disadvantaged communities (e.g. TTY phones). It is also imperative that these systems are frequently tested.

**Private Sector Service Providers, Don Boland, California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA):**

Don Boland, CUEA, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the integration of public and private partnerships into the Emergency Management System. Anyone who is interested in reviewing this PowerPoint presentation should contact Tyler Block ([tblock@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:tblock@ccp.csus.edu)). Below is a summary of this presentation.

One major factor that may not be obvious to consider at first is power. No telecommunications system will work without a power source. Currently, telephone systems do not power their own systems and users are required to power their phone systems on their own end.

All private carriers are dependent upon industry for the development of necessary technology, making a public/private partnership ever more important. However, much of the concern about alerting and warning the public is not technological, it is procedural. Mr. Boland suggested that in addition to technology, this group should focus heavily on standards of practice. The combination of copper, fiber, and airwaves provides an unlimited capacity within telecommunications networks that will help overcome the challenge of alerting diverse audiences.

**Local Government, Ron Alsop, San Luis Obispo County Office of Emergency Services:**

Ron Alsop, SLO County OES, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the local government perspective of alert and warning notification. Anyone who is interested in reviewing this PowerPoint presentation should contact Tyler Block ([tblock@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:tblock@ccp.csus.edu)). Below is a summary of this presentation.

There are currently numerous methods that local governments are using to alert and warn the public. Some of those methods include: 1) Emergency Alert System (EAS); 2) Reverse/Auto-dial systems; 3) Emergency Digital Information System (EDIS); 4) Outdoor sirens (although very rare). There are shortfalls associated with each of these systems. This underscores the important fact that many systems need to be utilized in order to reach different sectors of the public.

Another big challenge at the local level is the process of public education. The public has a desire for instant information, which clearly cannot be met on all fronts. Beyond the implicit technological challenges are logistical challenges. Mr. Alsop pointed out the need to be consistent in plans and procedures for entities which use alert and warning systems. Current steps are being implemented as "interim fixes" to the problems with alerting the public. Mr. Alsop suggested that this group focus on long-term procedures and solutions to this challenge.

Comment: Currently, 85-90% of America relies on the EIS system. It would be great if this group could come up with a Common Alert Protocol (CAP) similar to

the CAP that EIS uses, so that we all speak the same language. An issue that is tied into the problem of a standard language is training. The turnover in this field being so high, it is difficult to train people who are not there for the long term.

A question was asked from the group about why it is not currently required for all telecommunications devices to be registered in a 9-11 database. Ron Alsop responded that there are currently ideas floating around at the Federal level that explore this idea.

Another question was asked about the possibility of coordinating with agencies that run the 9-1-1 database (e.g. DGS). Ron Alsop responded by saying that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently trying to figure out which technical system it will use, which may not be the 9-1-1 system. The preliminary guidelines regarding this issue are due out in late April, while the final guidelines are due out in the fall. California can look forward to this information.

*Comment:* Cell phone users can currently be contacted by area code. Due to the fact that we may be in different geographic areas at the time of an emergency, this system is not always effective. We should explore ways to contact all callers within a certain geographic area, rather than those from specific area codes.

#### **Public Utilities Commission, Eric Van Wambeke, CPUC:**

Eric Van Wambeke, CPUC, gave a presentation on the activities of the CPUC in the area of alert and warning. Anyone who is interested in his presentation slide should contact Tyler Block ([tblock@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:tblock@ccp.csus.edu)). Below is a summary of this presentation.

Power is one of the big issues in the telecommunications industry. New systems are eliminating centralized power sources and requiring users to provide their own power (i.e. if you power goes out, your system does not function). The CPUC is currently conducting a case study analysis on the issue; a report will be coming out within the next couple of months. The CPUC is also working on a report about communications systems during the October 2007 Southern California Wild Fires.

Mr. Van Wambeke recommended that as this group moves forward, keep it in mind that there is not one single way to provide alert and warning notification. Alert and warning planners should take a holistic approach and realize that a successful alert and warning system will be comprised of many different technologies. He suggested that standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines be put in place first to guide those who have not yet developed their own system.

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### **Small Group Dialogue: Implementing AB 2231 (Pavley)**

Workshop participants were asked to take 20 minutes to discuss issues associated with alert and warning with their colleagues at their table. They were provided with a

worksheet of questions to help guide their conversation. The following are the compiled results of themes that arose from each group's report back.

1. What other sectors or stakeholders should be involved in our ongoing project not already mentioned today?

- + All sectors of Government—specifically named: CHP, OHS, California Volunteers
- + Legislative Staff
- + Non Governmental Organizations (NGO)
- + PG+E
- + School Districts
- + California League of Cities, California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
- + Educational institutions: universities, private, public, community and charter
- + Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- + Long Distance Telecommunications
- + Red Cross
- + Hospitals
- + Voice over IP (VOIP) providers—SKYPE, Yahoo, Google, etc.
- + Internet Service Providers (ISP)
- + Nontraditional social networking—MySpace, Facebook, etc.
- + Cable Companies
- + Behavioral Specialists—need to know how people will react
- + Hospitality/Tourist agencies
- + Information Technology professionals
- + Special Needs Populations—sign language interpreters, deaf community, blind community
- + California National Emergency Number Association (CalNENA)
- + 2-1-1
- + Amateur radio users
- + California Broadcasters Association
- + California Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA)
- + California State Sheriffs Association (CSSA)
- + DGS 9-1-1
- + Farm Industry
- + Rural Fire and Police Agencies
- + Other national disaster responder organizations—Salvation Army, Southern Baptists, etc.
- + Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

2. Of the Pavley goals, which are most important from your organization perspective?

- + Standards and Protocol development and agreement—need to be in line with FCC
- + Establishment of alerting protocol (who and when?)
- + Public/Private Partnerships
- + Public Education and Outreach

- ✚ Training—NIMS, SEMS
  - ✚ Development of pilot program and best practices (Research Japan's nationwide earthquake system)
  - ✚ Interoperability
  - ✚ Technology
  - ✚ Establishing funding mechanisms
3. Of the above priority issues, which do you think should be addressed first? Is there a sequence to be aware of?
- ✚ Standardization should be addressed ASAP
  - ✚ Cost
  - ✚ Future technology
  - ✚ Public Education
  - ✚ Technology
  - ✚ Originator Training
  - ✚ Liability surrounding false alerts
  - ✚ Interoperability
4. Do key areas warrant special work groups? If yes, what are the topics and who should be involved?
- ✚ Prisons
  - ✚ Schools
  - ✚ Technology and capabilities
  - ✚ Standards, Protocols, and Procedures
  - ✚ First Responders
  - ✚ End-user input
  - ✚ Public awareness/education
  - ✚ Contracting—negotiation with private vendors
  - ✚ Liabilities
  - ✚ Special Needs
  - ✚ Content Development
  - ✚ Interstate Coordination
5. Please look at the draft charter: Other suggestions on process for the effort?
- ✚ Guidelines for functional equivalency and effective communication

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## Next Steps and Adjourn

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the CA Governor's Office of Emergency Services Headquarters in Rancho Cordova. The legislation calls for the group to meet four times. The other two meetings will likely fall in late September and early December.

### Public Comments:

- The working groups will be very beneficial. However, it will be helpful for future meeting to be able to sit down and talk with colleagues about specific topics.



- Prior to the next workshop, it would be helpful to have a presentation on what efforts the FCC is undertaking regarding the subject of alert and warning notification. California needs to be able to build from the feds.
- Participants felt that a full day meeting format, with a working lunch, would allow them to be more productive in the future.

**Closing Remarks—Deputy Director Kelly Huston, OES:**

Mr. Huston reminded the group that OES is very excited about this new process, as it is very important to California. The subject matter of alert and warning notification has a direct application to each participant's personal life. He said that everyone can have a significant impact by participating in the Alert & Warning Work Group. Everyone participating in the process has valuable input that needs to be heard.

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## Attendance

Allen, Betty (Department of Mental Health Care)  
Alsop, Ron (SLO County OES)  
Ashbee, John (Infiniti Consulting Group, Inc.)  
Baldwin, Mark (Kern County Sheriff)  
Barker, David (Kern County Sheriff)  
Berry, Joe (California Broadcasters Association)  
Boland, Don (California Utilities Emergency Association)  
Botterell, Art (Contra Costa County Sheriff)  
Brown, Mike (BTH)  
Brown, Lynn (Mountain View Fire Department)  
Candelaria, Jerome (CA Cable and Telecommunications)  
Carlson, Steve (Ca Gov. Affairs Counsel)  
Celoni, Madeline (Alameda County)  
Chan, Mary (Department of Defense)  
Charlene, Angelo (Infiniti Consulting Group, Inc.)  
Christensen, Judith (OES, CTD)  
Cline, George (National Weather Service)  
Cogan, Karen (State Seismic Safety Commission)  
DeCrescenzo, Joan (DGS-TD)  
DeBeaux, John (California Emergency Services Association)  
DeJong, MaryLiz (AT&T)  
Devyllder, Richard (OES)  
Dizmang, Sue (California Fire Chiefs Association)  
Duer, Paul (Department of Technology Services)  
Elder, Erin (SRA Touchstone Consulting)  
Foot, Ken (Santa Clara County OES)  
French, Kristine (DGS)  
Gabbert, Jim (State Emergency Communications Committee)  
Garton, Dennis (Tehama County Sheriff)  
Green, Ben (OES Telecom)  
Grundy, Dean (Roseville Fire)

Gunther-Allen, Janette (Department of Justice)  
Hamill, Zachary (Sonoma County Dept. of Emergency Services)  
Hannibal, Weedy (Butte County Communications)  
Hansen, Stephen (Department of Managed Health Care)  
Herlocker, Matt (United Animal Nations)  
Hertan, Robert (CPUC)  
Hogan, Kristin (Circle Point)  
Hunt, Kim (DGS)  
Hurd, Michael (Sprint)  
Iljana, Thor (CNG)  
Ince, Roger (Sacramento Co. OES)  
John, Greg (American Red Cross)  
Johnson, Dorothy (League of Cities)  
Kane, Stephen (Pala Fire Department)  
Kaufman, Angela (LA Department of Disability)  
Kieren, Joe (AT&T)  
Koeneker, Patrick (OHS)  
Lee, Bruce (Sprint)  
Leschinsky, Frank (Volcano Communications Group)  
Litkouhi, Simin (CPUC)  
Loeven, Lewis  
Lopez, Chris (Federal Signal Corporation)  
Mahaley, Michael (San Mateo County Sheriff's Office)  
Matta, Sara (2-1-1 California)  
McCamey, Robert (CHP)  
McCarthy, Richard (State Seismic Safety Commission)  
Mearns, Jon (American Red Cross)  
Moretti, Matt (AT&T)  
Morgan, James (El Dorado County Sheriff's OES)  
Moussa, Carolyn (OES)  
Mutti, Sheri (NorCal Services for Deaf)  
Nebezahl, Scott (Seismic Warning Systems, Inc.)  
Niva, Ilkka (Nokia Inc.)  
Porter, Jamie (CDSS, Disaster Services Section)

Powers, Mark (California Broadcasters Association)  
 Prigozen, Lisa (CPUC)  
 Remitz, Tony (Department of Mental Health Care)  
 Rockwell, Cheri (Butte County Communications)  
 Rosa-Robinson, Trina (DTS, Disaster Recover Coordinator)  
 Rosenberg, Lee (URS Corporation)  
 Rudman, Richard (State Emergency Communications Committee)  
 Ryser, Vonnie (Department of Mental Health)  
 Sanders, Scott (Infiniti Consulting Group, Inc.)  
 Sieracki, Paul (Sprint)  
 Simpson, Charlie (OES Law Enforcement)  
 Simpson, Karen (Verizon Business)  
 Singleton, David (Tulare County Sheriff's Department)  
 Sirney, Jason (Sacramento County OES)  
 Skidmore, Rebecca (CSU, Office of Risk Management)  
 Smith, Steve (Cal/OSHA)  
 Spencer, Bart (Cooper Notification)  
 Spiegel, Sam (Folsom Police Department, Chief)  
 Tyler, Sarah (Bay Area SUASI)  
 Urban, John (Oakland)  
 Van Miller, Phillip (United Calling Network)  
 Van Wambeke, Erik (CPUC)  
 Viray, Elaine (CaliforniaVolunteers)  
 Wade, Ron (LA County Office of Emergency Management)  
 Webb, Kathleen (State Consumer Services Agency)

Webb, William (Colinga State Hospital Fire Chief)  
 Westbrook, Dan (Merced County OES)  
 White, Michele (Department of Public Health)  
 White, Phyllis (CPUC)  
 Whitten, Julie (Department of Public Health)  
 Wilkinson, Chris (Yuba Community College District Police)  
 Wilson, Peter (DSS, Emergency Food Assistance Program)  
 Younce, Christian (T-Mobile USA)  
 Zagaris, Kim (OES Fire)  
 Zolfarelli, Jeff (Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department)  
 Zuniga, Helen (Citrus Heights Police Department)

#### CCP Facilitation Team

Adam Sutkus  
 Gail Lockhart  
 Sarah Rubin  
 Tyler Block

#### **Documents and Materials Provided:**

- Agenda
- AB2231
- Alert and Warning Information for Vendors
- Small Group Exercise Worksheet
- All Attendees Information Form
- California's Alert and Warning Project Summary
- Draft Alert and Warning Working Group Charter
- Standing Ground Rules
- Working in Groups